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MARCH 2009 GREAT LAKES WATER LEVEL SUMMARY

LAKE SUPERIOR

Lake Superior continued its seasonal decline during March. Its mean water level of 600.66 feet was an inch lower than its February mean level. Even though Lake Superior was 6 inches below its long term average (LTA), and 5 inches below its chart datum elevation, it was 4 inches higher than its March 2008 level. In addition, its outflow through the St. Marys River was lower than usual for March. Precipitation across the Lake Superior basin was about three-quarters of its March average, but has been over an inch above average over the past year. Lake Superior will remain above last year's level through May, and be similar to last year's level into September. Also, it is expected to rise above its chart datum in May, and will remain 5 to 6 inches below its LTA over the next 6 months.

LAKE MICHIGAN-HURON

Lake Michigan-Huron continued its seasonal climb in March, rising 3 inches. Its mean water level in March was 577.72 feet, a foot higher than last year, but 9 inches below its LTA. Lake Michigan-Huron was 3 inches above its chart datum in March, and is predicted to remain 5 to 14 inches above datum through September. Lake Michigan-Huron's outflow into the St. Clair River was below average in March. The Lake Michigan-Huron basin experienced below average precipitation in March, but precipitation within the last year has been about 2.5 inches above average. Lake Michigan-Huron is forecasted to be 8 to 9 inches below its LTA over the next 6 months, but remain 6 to 9 inches above its levels of a year ago during that time period.

LAKE ST. CLAIR

The level of Lake St. Clair rose in March. Its monthly mean water level of 574.34 feet was 4 inches higher than its February mean level, 7 inches higher than it was a year ago, 6 inches higher than its LTA, and 22 inches above its chart datum. Lake St. Clair's outflow through the Detroit River was near average. The most recent 6 month forecast projects Lake St. Clair to be 4 to 5 inches higher than last year's levels through June, and then be similar to last year's levels from July to September. The lake is predicted to be 2 inches above average in April, and then be 0 to 2 inches below its LTA through September.

LAKE ERIE

Driven by precipitation that was 40% above average, Lake Erie's water level rose substantially in March. Its mean water level in March was 571.92 feet, 10 inches above the previous month's average level. In addition, Lake Erie was 2 inches higher than it was in March 2008 and 10 inches higher than its LTA. Similar to last month, precipitation in the Lake Erie basin was an about an inch above average, and has been almost 3 inches above average over the past 12 months. Moreover, outflow from Lake Erie into the Niagara River was above average in March. The latest six month forecast predicts Lake Erie will be 2 to 4 inches above its levels of a year ago through September. Lake Erie is projected to be 2 to 9 inches above its LTA through July, and near average in August and September.

LAKE ONTARIO

Just as in the two previous months, Lake Ontario rose during March. Its monthly mean water level climbed 4 inches to 245.80 feet. Lake Ontario was 9 inches above its LTA and 2 inches above what it was last March. Lake Ontario saw near average precipitation in March, and has experienced precipitation within the past year that is about 0.5 inches higher than average. Its outflow through the St. Lawrence River was above average in March. The most recent 6 month forecast projects Lake Ontario to be 0 to 5 inches below its level of a year ago into September. Lake Ontario is expected to remain 1 to 8 inches above its LTA through September.